

main body, to survey and mark, for purchase or condemnation, the lands required for this part of the canal, and to supervise its construction; the rest were sent forward, with a discretionary authority vested in the two resident Engineers, who were commissioned conjointly, to call in any aid they might need, to expedite the definitive location, and prepare, for immediate contract, forty miles of canal above Harper's Ferry.

This space was subdivided, of necessity, into the portion below the next convenient feeder from the river above Harper's Ferry, and another, which must depend for a supply of water upon the construction of a feeder at some point still higher up the Potomac.

A position below the mouth of Opecon creek, in Virginia, a tributary of the Potomac, capable of being rendered navigable as high up the vicinity of Winchester, having been before recommended by the Engineers, who had examined and reported on the location of the canal, and being approved by the Engineer who conducted the recent survey, the Board proceeded, on the 2d of this month, to place under contract twenty-two and a half miles of canal, between the 112th and the 157th sections, including the last, which comprehends the dam and feeder near the mouth of Opecon.

In this distance are embraced an aqueduct across Antietam, twenty-four culverts, and six lift locks, together with a guard lock and dam, of considerable elevation, across the Potomac.

Added to the four sections immediately above the Harper's Ferry feeder, the entire distance, between the two feeders already contracted for, is twenty-four and a half miles. It is distributed into forty-nine sections, and comprehends, besides a guard lock, ten lift locks overcoming an ascent of seventy-three feet in the river.

Power is expressly retained to alter, if found necessary on further investigation, both the elevation and position of the dam above Opecon; and, in the event of its being lowered, it is understood that one of the ten locks may be dispensed with, by giving an increased lift to that next below its intended position.

Supposing no change of the location, or plan of the dam, which, if altered in these respects, will be rendered as much cheaper in construction, as a few of the upper sections may, by such alterations possibly augmented in price, the contract and estimated cost of the forty-nine sections, including the dam and guard lock, as well as the lift locks, on the sections next above the Harper's Ferry feeder, were let in March, adding five per cent. the Engineers' estimate for contingencies, will be \$788,197. The contracts for a part of the masonry, designed to be let on the 2d instant, were deferred till the 5th, for want of time, and on account of the imperfect form of some of the proposals.

All the sections, with two of the locks and five culverts, have been placed under contract.

It is confidently believed, however, that the contracts to be let for the dam, and the remaining masonry of this part of the canal, will not raise the price above the estimate of the Engineer.